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TAGS: [KFLU](#) [KSTH](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: EGYPT AVIAN FLU UPDATE: 26TH HUMAN CASE  
CONFIRMED, NINE OUTBREAKS ON COMMERCIAL FARMS REPORTED

Sensitive but unclassified. Not for internet distribution.

¶1. (U) Ministry of Health and Population officials (MOHP) confirmed the 26th case of highly pathogenic H5N1 in a two-year old boy on March 19, and the 25th case on March 14 in a ten-year old girl, both from the Aswan governorate. Their families raise backyard poultry. Thirteen of the twenty-six confirmed human cases since March 2006 have died.

¶2. (SBU) Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) officials expressed concern over nine confirmed H5N1 outbreaks in the commercial poultry sector since February 2007. The government official responsible for avian influenza diagnostics told econoff on March 18 that "very poor biosecurity" standards on the nine farms led to recent H5N1 outbreaks. "If we are going to continue a mass vaccination program, we must improve the standards on commercial farms."

¶3. (SBU) One of these commercial farmers may be facing prosecution for knowingly selling infected birds to backyard farmers and directly causing another human case, according to MOA officials. The parents of human case number 23, a four-year old from Daqahliya, who recovered and was released from the hospital on March 5, reportedly unwittingly purchased sick birds from a farm with confirmed outbreaks. Following the initial appearance of H5N1 in February 2006, when more than 800 outbreaks were reported on commercial farms, Egyptian officials pursued a mass vaccination campaign. Though generally successful in eliminating the symptoms of the disease on commercial farms, vaccinated poultry continues to carry the virus.

¶4. (U) In an effort to stem cases in the backyard sector, where the majority of recent outbreaks have occurred, MOA officials issued a decree mandating vaccination of day-old chicks in traditional hatcheries, calling for compulsory registration of poultry farms countrywide, and instituting a mapping system for infected sites. The MOHP announced on March 11 the implementation of UNICEF-funded project to train 10,000 female volunteers in rural areas to raise awareness on disease prevention.  
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